



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
Kenneth H. Delano Agricultural Service Center
721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S
June 4, 2026 Meeting

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Phil St. Clair – Director – Via phone
Pat Voigt – Chairman
Roger Ediger - Director
Rick Henslee - Director

Joanne Keerins – Director

Alec Oliver – Associate
Dustin Kreger - Associate

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Danielle Kimball – Program Assistant
Matt Wenick – Grant Weed Control

Visitors:

Hannah Smith – NRCS
Jennifer – Malhuer Forest
Jason – Malhuer Forest
Trea Nance - ODEQ

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00pm
2. Approval of Minutes – Roger moved to approve the May 7, 2026, meeting minutes. Joanne gave the second. Phil St. Clair, Pat Voigt, Roger Ediger, Rick Henslee, and Joanne Keerins voted in favor. No opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors to introduce.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – The team recently completed their ranking period but learned they received no EQIP funding this year, as it was allocated to other counties. However, they were awarded six CSP contracts, which they will be working on over the next few weeks, with an obligation deadline approaching at the end of June. Ellie has also been assigned to the South Fork RCPP project, where she will begin contacting landowners and coordinating field visits with Amy Stiner to stay ahead of a fall deadline. Looking ahead, the office is preparing for a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) scheduled for September, when state office representatives will spend a week reviewing contracts and operations. As a result, the team's main focus over the summer will be to carefully review all contracts to ensure everything is complete and in order.
6. FSA – A representative was unable to attend.

7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Joanne reported, on behalf of Amy, that after ten years of monitoring, the South Fork John Day Watershed Council received and released the whitetop biological control agent. The Council applied for and was recommended for six OWEB grants supporting forestry, juniper removal, riparian restoration design, engagement, and cultural surveys. Additional funding was secured from the Ochoco National Forest for 70 miles of fencing as part of the Rail Ridge Fire recovery effort, and from the Malheur National Forest for pre-commercial thinning work in the Aldrich Forest area. The Council is partnering with Monument SWCD and ODF on Rail Ridge Fire recovery projects benefiting private landowners. Also partnering with ODF to complete 250 acres of forestry and 250 acres of juniper for private landowners through the Landscape Resiliency Program. Staff is also conducting ground-truthing site visits for RCPP applicants.
8. Malheur Forest – Jennifer reported the Title II Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) is being restarted after its charter was approved. Recruitment for new members is now open, and everyone must reapply, even previous members whose terms had not expired. The committee is seeking participants from three categories: industry, environmental interests, and elected officials/public-at-large, with a goal of at least three members per category and ideally five. Members must live in Oregon, generally near the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman, or Malheur National Forests, and commit to a four-year term. Although funding is already available and will continue to roll over, the committee likely will not begin active project work until the next fiscal year. Jennifer encouraged interested individuals to reach out and noted that recruitment efforts will be widely shared among partner organizations. Jennifer also reported on the Mountaineer Innovation Project, a proposed \$5.5 million agreement focused on completing third-party NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) work across a large landscape area. Blue Mountain Forest Partners will serve as the primary partner, responsible for hiring the third-party NEPA contractor, coordinating data sharing, and determining the scope and acreage that can be covered. The organization will also contract a public outreach and facilitation company to manage stakeholder engagement and will hire specialists to review and analyze the NEPA work. Although progress has been slowed by challenges within the grants and agreements process, development of the agreement has been ongoing since December and is still moving forward.

Jason reported on the new 20-year stewardship cooperative agreement with Iron Triangle that was recently highlighted in a press release. The agreement is designed to foster long-term partnerships with industry and support the return of local wood-processing and milling infrastructure, reducing the need to haul logs long distances and strengthening the regional forest products economy. Rather than committing all timber volume to one entity, the agreement provides a framework for collaboration, planning, and a reliable supply of material that can help partners secure additional funding and investment. Initial work will focus on areas such as Upper Bear and Star Aspen, including difficult-to-sell or remote units, while still maintaining traditional timber sales and other forest management projects. Jason emphasized that rebuilding processing capacity is critical to achieving forest health, wildfire risk reduction, and active management goals, especially as the agency works toward ambitious timber volume targets. Additional updates included the hiring of nine seasonal employees, primarily in recreation, range, and vegetation programs, which will help increase fieldwork capacity and provide workforce development opportunities.
9. ODA – A representative was unable to attend.
10. OR State Forestry – A representative was unable to attend.
11. OR Dept. Environmental Quality – Trea reported that there is limited new information to share as the team remains in the middle of the public process for the temperature TMDL replacement. Draft documents, reflecting updates made between the first and most recent RAC meeting on May 20, are currently available online, with further details to be provided by Kyle. Additional revisions are still expected before the public comment period, which is tentatively scheduled from August through October and will include a public hearing. More updates will be shared as the process continues.
12. John Rowell County Commissioner – Representative was unable to attend.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

13. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported that treatments have been continuing for private lands. Treatment activities are underway on BLM lands, particularly in areas affected by the Battle Mountain Complex Fire, with work soon expanding to Forest Service lands impacted by the Rail Ridge and Falls Fire. Due to unusually low river flows, the annual float trip has been cancelled for the first time in 13 years. Matt met with a couple of representatives from Wilbur-Ellis, including the head of their products division, which focuses on bringing new products to market. They conducted several tests using different fertilizer products for noxious weed control. We are also exploring the possibility of incorporating root stimulants this fall when treating annual grasses on test plots. The goal is to determine whether root stimulation can help perennial plants recover more quickly after annual grass control treatments. Matt also met with a representative from Corteva who oversees testing new chemical products. They traveled to Fox Valley to evaluate a new herbicide currently identified only by a research number, along with several existing products, for leafy spurge control. The new product appears promising, and we will monitor the areas treated over the next year to assess its performance. The results will help determine whether it has the potential to become a commercially available option for leafy spurge management in the future.
14. District Programs – Kyle had the opportunity to meet with Kevin Fenn. As most of you know, Brent Smith is the new ODA representative for our area, and Kevin serves in a leadership role above Brent. I was candid with him about the district's history with ODA, including some of the challenges and frustrations we have experienced over the years. We discussed several topics, including the district's role and the broad range of programs we manage. Kevin took a genuine interest in understanding everything the district is involved in, and he appeared impressed with the scope of work the district accomplishes. We also talked about potential funding opportunities through ODA and ways our organizations might work together more effectively in the future. Kyle is hopeful to continue having productive conversations moving forward.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

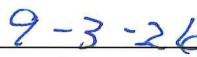
15. Temperature TMDL Update – The discussion focused on the ongoing development of the Temperature TMDL and the transition toward implementation plans as the primary method for achieving water quality goals. It was noted that, while elements of existing Area Plans may continue to be used, regulatory agencies appear to be shifting toward a more implementation-focused approach. A key topic was the Fiscal Impact Statement and whether it adequately captures potential effects on agricultural and other small businesses. Concerns were raised about how DEQ could conclude that impacts would be minimal when the number of affected landowners and the extent of future requirements remain uncertain. DEQ representatives explained that impacts are expected to be limited because implementation will occur gradually over time, rely heavily on voluntary participation, and prioritize restoration efforts with willing landowners. The group also discussed the use of shade-gap analyses and riparian restoration strategies, including the proposed 120-foot buffer, which DEQ emphasized is an alternative option rather than a universal requirement. ODA is expected to use implementation plans to identify restoration priorities, set goals, and report progress, with flexibility in determining where and how restoration efforts occur. Overall, the discussion highlighted both the opportunities and uncertainties associated with the new TMDL framework, particularly regarding implementation, voluntary participation, and potential economic impacts on landowners and small businesses.
16. Review of Marketing Materials - Kyle presented the board with new edited logo options after getting feedback from the Board at the last meeting.

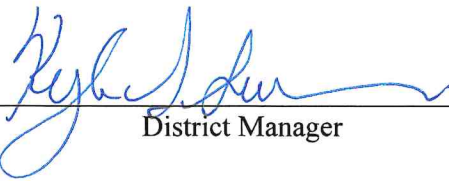
FINANCIAL BUSINESS

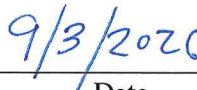
19. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of May 2026 were reviewed by the Directors.
20. Approve Bills – **Joanne moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of May 2026. Rick gave the second. Joanne Keerins, Rick Henslee, Phil St. Clair, Pat Voigt, and Roger Ediger voted yes. No opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:21


Board Chair


Date


District Manager


Date